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THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

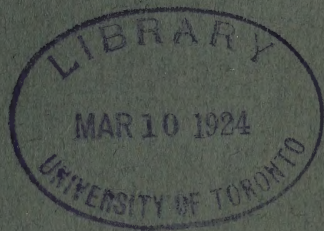
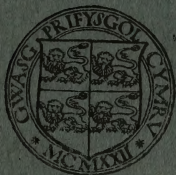
AN INAUGURAL LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE
THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF WALES
ABERYSTWYTH

ON FRIDAY, 23 FEBRUARY, 1923

BY

C. K. WEBSTER, M.A.

WILSON PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF WALES



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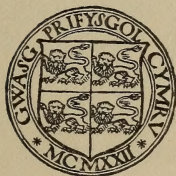
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THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

My predecessor, Professor Zimmern, did not give an Inaugural Lecture, but during his tenure of this Chair he put his thoughts on record in articles and books, vivid and humane documents written in a singularly attractive manner, which have aroused much interest in two continents. To me, as to many other students of International Politics, they have been stimulating and suggestive, and, in conjunction with his vigorous and fascinating lectures, they have helped to arouse a new interest in International Affairs amongst the British people.

If to-day I have ventured to attempt the task of delivering an Inaugural Lecture, it is not because I am unaware of its difficulty. It is one not altogether new to me. I have already had the experience of reading, at the close of my tenure of a Chair, the principles and aspirations which I ventured to enunciate in an Inaugural Lecture when I was appointed to it. The process is a chastening one. Nevertheless, I also feel that the confession of faith which I made at Liverpool was not without value, to me at any rate, since it enabled faithful friends and critics to give me much valuable advice, from which I trust I have profited. I venture to hope that the attempt which I make to-day to define, with such precision as I can, some of my thoughts on the subject of International Politics, may bring me a like return of sincere and salutary criticism.

My task is of course a good deal heavier to-day than it was when I made confession upon the subject of Modern History. I find that I then, as young men will, dwelt rather on the faults and deficiencies of Historians than on their manifold excellences. But Modern History had been taught and studied for a generation in our Universities, and there were broad paths, already surveyed, which could not be missed. To-day, however, I am almost free from such restraint, and with the freedom comes a deep sense of responsibility. This is the first Chair of International Politics founded in this country, and though in other countries there are professors whose duties are akin to mine, there is no general acceptance of the principles of the study. Indeed, even if such principles had existed before the Great War, that event has so sapped the foundations of International order, and changed so remorselessly our conceptions of International Relations, that a recasting of our ideas would be necessary. But of course no ordered and scientific body of knowledge did exist in 1914. Perhaps, if it had, the catastrophe might have been averted; for its mere existence would have been proof that men were thinking about very different things than actually were occupying their attention.

I have, therefore, a wide choice of materials and methods when I set out to indicate in the most tentative fashion a few of the possibilities in the study of International Politics. The objects of the Chair have, indeed, been indicated in general terms by its founders. In the letter which Mr. David Davies wrote to the President of the Council when he made the offer of the endowment, he described its purpose as 'the study of

those related problems of law and politics, of ethics and economics, which are raised by the project of a League of Nations, and for the encouragement of a truer understanding of civilizations other than our own'. This is, indeed, a programme in itself, and the call which it makes is one which is, to me at any rate, irresistible. But the urgency of the need, which is there indicated, makes me feel all the more keenly the difficulty of endeavouring to select, amongst the various lines of development suggested, those which are most likely to bring about the object which inspired them. I need scarcely add that the holder of the Chair is left entirely free, by the founders' express wishes, to hold what opinions his knowledge and conscience dictate of the League of Nations or any other institution. In the Trust Deeds, in fact, International Politics is defined as 'Political Science in its application to International Relations with special reference to the best means of promoting peace between nations'. It is therefore from so general a definition that I must begin to-day.

'Political Science' is a title which has covered a good many different things at different times and places. It includes within its scope several different studies. The mixture varies with the predilections of the writer and the environment which surrounds him. It means, for example, one thing at Oxford and another at Cambridge—as different as the minds of Green and Sidgwick. In the United States, where it has been most extensively organized as a University study, it may mean anything from a dissertation on Kant to a description of Municipal Milk Cans. It is in fact, in its modern form, one of the 'synthetic' subjects which began to take a prominent

place in our Universities about the time when the older Studies had been split up by the creation of new Chairs and Departments. When 'Natural Philosophy' had everywhere been replaced by the several branches of Natural and Applied Science, and new Chairs of various kinds of History, Languages, Economics, and Law had replaced the older and broader foundations, there began also to appear amongst us new arrivals, such as Education and Geography, so loose in their structure that to some they have appeared to be almost invertebrate. These last have at any rate aroused an enthusiasm and met a demand which more closely defined spheres of knowledge failed to elicit or satisfy. It is to such composite systems that 'Political Science' belongs, and even more obviously, therefore, 'Political Science' in its application to International Relations. The study of International Relations must obviously include many different branches of academic learning, so many and so different, indeed, that one individual cannot hope to have more than a nodding acquaintance with the greater portions of the field of inquiry. It depends upon the phenomena grouped generally under the headings of History, Law, Economics, Geography, and Psychology. Now I learnt as a young student enough International Law from Westlake, and Economics from Marshall, to realize how immense those studies were; Geography has been made at the same time more significant and more formidable for all of us in recent years; Psychology is at once increasingly fascinating and increasingly technical and medical. If, therefore, I dwell to-day particularly on the contribution which the study of Modern History may make towards the understanding of Inter-

national Politics, it is not because I do not recognize the importance of other departments of thought in its development, but because I must talk of that upon which I have had the greatest opportunity to reflect, and in the belief (as I hope to show) that the same principles of study apply to other parts of the subject.

The problem which I wish mainly to discuss to-day is as old as the organized activities of man, but one on which the War and the Peace have thrown a new and vivid light. For if the study of International Politics, here or elsewhere, is to be, in however slight a fashion, 'a means towards promoting peace between nations,' it must presumably exercise some direct effect on the actions of nations, by producing knowledge which may be directly serviceable towards the end desired. The question, then, to which I wish to direct your attention is: how far has our experience during the last eight years shown that the Historian of International Politics is a necessary or desirable ally for the man of action? How far does our gradually increasing knowledge of the History of the nineteenth century, for example, enable us to make better decisions as to our future? Can the statesman make real use of the knowledge which the Historian has garnered, and may perhaps be expected to amass with greater precision and more assurance in the near future? For Modern History, and in particular the History of International Relations, is a young Science, only gradually being formulated, as the documents from which it has to be written are at last being placed unreservedly in the hands of men trained to use them. Now during the War and the Peace the Historian was much used by the Diplomatist.

How far did his contribution affect the result? And was the effect good or ill? Can we remedy the defects? These are difficult questions to answer. I am not sure that the time has yet come when they can be answered. But on the answer depends the whole future of the civilization which we have built up. In it is involved the whole problem of man's control over his destiny—questions far too deep indeed for me to attempt to solve them here. But it may be worth while to try and isolate a few examples where the Historian came into contact with reality, to attempt to ascertain his influence on results, and to try and arrive at least tentatively at some general conclusions so far as the evidence will allow.

The salient points of our discussion will be familiar to you. It has often been said that History has no practical value. It is true that it never repeats itself exactly, and the differences between one age and another are so great, that to some any attempt to apply the lessons of the past is doomed to failure from the outset. Yet this pessimism has on the whole appealed to only a small minority of thinkers. The deep longing of the human soul to understand its own experiences, and to see, if only for a little way, into the future, has always led it back to a study of the past. 'The best qualification of a prophet is to have a good memory,' wrote Halifax,¹ and Historians and Philosophers have in every age constantly supported the same dictum. Francis Bacon wrote, 'In proportion as the errors which have been committed impeded the past, so do they

¹ *Miscellaneous Thoughts and Reflections; Works*, ed. Raleigh, p. 249.

afford reason to hope for the future.’¹ Voltaire, whose greatness as an Historian is often forgotten, believed that History was utilitarian, though he thought the less it pretended to be so the better.² Even men of action have often taken the same point of view. ‘Let my son often read and reflect on History: this is the only true philosophy,’ were the last instructions of the greatest of them all to the King of Rome, and he was so convinced of its power that he devoted his years of exile to constructing a legendary account of his own activities, which, as he rightly foresaw, profoundly affected the future of France and Europe. When, indeed, the first Chairs of Modern History were founded in this country at Oxford and Cambridge in the early eighteenth century, it was with the object of furnishing the Crown ‘with a constant supply of persons every way qualified for the management of such weighty affairs and negotiations as your Majesties occasions may require’—an experiment which unfortunately failed, as Professor Firth³ has shown, because the Professors lacked diligence. Nevertheless, in many countries in the nineteenth century History became one of the main instruments in the political activities of man. The new Nationalities were in a sense created by the study of their past, and in France, no less than in Germany and Italy, the Statesmen were profoundly influenced by the Historians. It is, indeed, extraordinarily difficult to dis-

¹ Quoted by Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, p. 57.

² ‘Quelle serait l’histoire utile? celle qui nous apprendrait nos devoirs et nos droits sans paraître prétendre à nous les enseigner.’ *De l’Histoire, Œuvres*, t. 29, p. 343.

³ *English Historical Review*, vol. xxxii, No. 125, January 1917.

entangle cause and effect. In spite of the brilliant study of Mr. Gooch, we must still often be ignorant whether the Historian is produced by, or produces events. But of his intimate connexion with them there can be no shadow of doubt.

When the Great War broke out, therefore, it was not surprising that there was an appeal in almost every country to the Historian. In many cases he became of course merely a journalist writing biased History at the bidding of his Government, and there soon appeared a strange medley of improvisations and exhortations which it would be a misnomer to term History. Yet even this phenomenon has significance ; for the fact that in all countries the appeal to History was made, even when it appeared that the verdict must be a hostile one, shows how big and potent a claim it possesses to move the minds of men. There was, however, much work of a more serious and scientific nature done by the Historians. As the diplomatic problems increased in complexity and difficulty, the Historian was used more and more by those conducting the International Relations of the several countries. In France, of course, such connexions had long existed. But even in England and the United States, countries where the academic expert had always been regarded with an instinctive and intense distrust, the Historian was associated increasingly with the practical conduct of affairs, as the area of conflict broadened, and the men of action were confronted with new and startling emergencies. In our country, by the end of the War, the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and the War Office, as well as the War Cabinet, had each their historical section, staffed for the

most part by dons, some of whom were Historians, while others were learning to be so; and all were engaged in complicated researches upon the problems of the War and the Peace. As the latter grew nearer their activities increased and multiplied. The Foreign Office organization, for example, produced eventually 167 monographs for the instruction of the British Delegates at the Peace Conference which attempted to give an historical, economic, and geographical survey of every country with whose problems the Statesmen were likely to be concerned. Many of these studies, it is true, were not produced until the Congress was nearly over, but at Paris Historians were as thick as bees, and some of them played a distinguished part in the diplomacy of the Conference. We may remember, indeed, that three of the greatest actors in World Affairs had at one time been teachers of History or Political Science. The Statesman who formulated the ideals of the peoples, the greatest soldier of the War, and the most successful of all the founders of the new States, had all three been Historians and Professors, and in the work of Woodrow Wilson, Foch, and Masaryk the results of their past training could be easily discerned.

That such an immense conglomeration of historical talent at Paris had an effect was obvious. To ascertain how great that effect was, or whether it was altogether good, is, however, an exceedingly difficult task. To trace the processes which led to great decisions of the War and the Peace is not yet possible. In some cases the facts are not yet known or it is impossible to state them, though the numerous accounts by Statesmen and soldiers now at leisure have added continually to our

documentary evidence. But even when all the facts are known it is exceedingly hard to weigh the respective value of different contributions to a result. Arguments are associated with personalities, and the complicated processes by which policy is decided almost defy analysis. It is not too much to say that in many cases the principal actors themselves did not know exactly how the final result was brought about, and the instructions that moved armies and settled the boundaries of nations were often produced by a multitude of different forces which cannot as yet be disentangled. I cannot therefore make a quantitative estimate, but I may perhaps direct your attention to one or two specific instances which illustrate, in my opinion, some deductions that may be drawn from the whole mass of facts.

For in some cases the influence of the appeal to History is clearly apparent, and perhaps most obviously of all is it seen in the attitude of the victorious Allies towards the Russian Revolution. The parallel to the French Revolution and especially the effect upon the Revolution of foreign intervention was of course in the minds of all. There are still controversies connected with some points in the French Revolution, but on the whole there is substantial agreement amongst Historians as to the effect of foreign intervention on its progress. In the debates that arose in the early days of 1919, as to the attitude which should be adopted towards the Bolsheviks, this precedent was constantly used by those, amongst whom Mr. Lloyd George was foremost, who deprecated the policy which was constantly being urged by the French and some British Ministers, of intervention by force. I do not suggest that Mr. Lloyd George's views

on the Russian Revolution were decided by a profound study of the French. But he was well instructed on this point, and was able at once to seize the value of the precedent as an argument in discussions which took place in Paris. Moreover, the history of the French Revolution and the part which foreign intervention played in it was well known, not only to Historians but to the Western people generally. The argument could be used not only at the Council Table but also in the Press and on the Platform. It appealed to the democratic forces both in France and Britain, and its effect on the actual decisions which were taken was, in my opinion, profound. Nor must its actual value be underrated. The world was confronted with a situation which in many respects was unique. No expert knowledge of the collection of peoples which make up the Russian Empire could give the Statesmen any real idea of the probable course of events. But the French Revolution did at least portray to them phenomena in many ways similar, produced by the liberation of the deepest of human passions, hunger, revenge, greed, and the desire for liberty, directed by men who had been brought up to despise authority and to be governed by principle. That the lesson of the French Revolution was only imperfectly applied is true, but applied it was, if in a halting and irresolute fashion, and much human life and wealth was thus spared to Europe.

An example of quite a different kind, but which also furnishes some negative if not positive lessons, is the influence of the Congress of Vienna upon the Conference of Paris. I may say at the outset that its influence was not large, but the reason why this was so is instructive.

It was of course obvious from the beginning of the War that the Congress of Vienna furnished the only precedent of any value for the Congress that must inevitably meet at the conclusion of the contest. This was recognized at an early date by our own Foreign Office. When, however, reference was made by officials to the standard histories, it was found that there did not exist any detailed account of the organization of the Congress of Vienna, and that the processes by which its decisions were reached, though they had been often and bitterly criticized by Historians and Statesmen, were for the most part unknown or at best half understood. One would have imagined that the Congress of Vienna, which laid down frontiers in Europe which were not altered for a generation, would have been explored in minutest detail by the Historians of the nineteenth century. But by 1914 no scientific account of the Congress of Vienna had been written. The work had indeed been begun. Professor August Fournier, of the University of Vienna, had spent many years collecting materials for what would almost certainly have been the authoritative history of the Congress. But the War interrupted his labours and he died in 1919 with his task still uncompleted.

It was these circumstances which enabled me to obtain three months' leave in 1918 with orders to produce a monograph on the Congress which I had long been studying. This task I accomplished in the time allotted, but I did not expect that such historical researches would have much influence on the making of peace. It was not indeed difficult to teach officials such lessons as could be derived from a detailed study of the Congress.

When Sir Basil Thomson, for example, drew up his instructions to the British Delegation for the avoidance of espionage at Paris, they were based on the works in which Professor Fournier and M. Weil had revealed the whole process of espionage as it had existed at Vienna in 1814. But while soldiers, civil servants, and even lady clerks could be made to observe such precautions, it was impossible to obtain similar obedience from more august and sometimes better informed individuals, such as the Prime Ministers. And the bigger lessons, which might have been drawn from the study of the Vienna Congress, if its decisions had been more of a theme for scientific study and less for highly coloured rhetoric during the last fifty years, were ignored by those who could have used them best. Some of these deductions I had attempted to draw in a paper written at the close of my historical researches in July 1918, when no one could foresee how quickly the peace negotiations would be begun. They are without importance, but you will perhaps allow me to quote a paragraph or two as an illustration of an actual exercise in the application of historical research to International Politics.

‘The salient feature of the Congress [of Vienna] itself was that it grew out of the circumstances of the time, and assumed a shape which was not designed by the statesmen who had summoned it. As has been seen, it was originally intended that the settlement of Europe should be arranged by the four Great Powers of the Alliance amongst themselves and incorporated forthwith in the treaty of peace with the enemy. The Congress of Vienna would then have been—what it was originally intended to be—merely an assembly for the ratification and adjustment of previous decisions, in which both the enemy and the smaller Powers would have been allowed

only to obtain concessions on minor points, on condition of accepting the arrangements already determined. . . .

‘The word “Congress” has also been frequently used at the present time, but it may be doubted if the constitution and functions of such an assembly have been clearly defined in the minds of those who have referred to it. Since the military situation will be the main factor in determining these points, they can hardly be settled in all their details; but too much attention cannot be paid to the forms and organization of such a Congress at as early a period as possible. The Statesmen at Vienna more than once bitterly regretted that they had not been more successful in reaching a solution of such problems before peace was made; and to the lack of imagination and foresight which made them incapable of seeing the importance of previous preparation must be attributed much of the difficulty, delay, and danger of the Vienna Congress. . . .

‘In order to avoid a position so dangerous, the first expedient must be the signature by the enemy of the outline of the terms of peace while the armies are still in being and the military situation is still the dominant factor. If it is possible to secure, as the British plenipotentiary endeavoured in vain to secure in 1814, an agreement among the Allies on the whole settlement, the enemy can be forced to sign this *in toto* if the military situation permits. Such terms need not be worked out in detail, but they should contain the outline of the whole settlement, and not merely one or two points, as was the case in 1814. They should also contain the functions and constitution of the subsequent Congress, which would then be an assembly for ratification, detail drafting, and adjustment. If these terms were sufficiently comprehensive in outline, demobilization could then follow immediately—a course which would be likely to appeal to all the belligerents, in view both of the immense relief obtained by the reduction of the naval, military, and industrial forces now employed and of the fact that the Congress is likely to be of considerable duration. The terms of such demobi-

lization would indeed properly be part of the document on which the Congress would be based.'¹

It was impossible at that moment to obtain the attention of Statesmen for considerations like these, but I am still of the opinion that had those in authority been able in the autumn of 1918 to spare a moment or two to consider these matters, some, at any rate, of the confusions and difficulties of the Paris Conference might have been avoided.

At the Conference itself all reference to the Congress of Vienna was banned from an early date by the express wish of President Wilson himself. At one of the early meetings of the Council of Ten, one of the Dominion Representatives endeavoured to use it as an illustration of present difficulties. President Wilson thereupon declared that he hoped that no reference to the proceedings at Vienna would ever be again brought into the discussions, and, so far as I know, his wishes were observed. One cannot help wondering, however, whether it was wise of him on this occasion thus to sink the Historian in the moralist. Had he known more of the methods of Talleyrand and Metternich he might have understood more completely those of M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George. But he applied the standard of his age. The failure of the Historian to make known the truth about the Congress of Vienna during the nineteenth century meant that its lessons could not be applied in 1919.

Even more instructive perhaps are the academic researches that preceded the consideration of the

¹ *General Observations on the Congress of Vienna and the Application of its History to the Present Time.*

League of Nations. Both in the United States and this country there was much hard thinking on this subject which had subsequently considerable effect upon the instrument actually drawn up at Paris. Now the main historical precedent for the League of Nations is that system of Conferences which originated in the Alliance that overthrew Napoleon and which is loosely referred to as the 'Holy Alliance'. Its failure has been much quoted, both by those favourable to and by those hostile to the League of Nations. There are indeed, I think, valuable lessons to be learnt from this period of history, but before they can be learnt it must be studied in a much more complete way than has at present been attempted. In spite of the important work of Professor Alison Phillips, the great mass of documents, on which the history of this attempt must be founded, still lie uninterpreted because they have never been published or even read. The two distinguished Historians, therefore, who were members of the Phillimore Committee appointed by the Foreign Office to draw up a report on the League of Nations, could not give to their colleagues a comprehensive account of this period. The influence of History on the Report is therefore less useful than it might have been, and influenced, I fancy, the Committee but little.¹ In the

¹ Cf. *Phillimore Report*, § 3: 'With regard to other methods of international combinations for avoiding war which were actually attempted during the nineteenth century, we have not completed our investigation, and without further inquiry into past political experience we would offer no opinion as to whether a modification of those methods or a formal League of Nations is the more promising means of securing the end in view.'

same way the Fabian study made by Mr. Woolf in 1916,¹ in some ways the most important academic contribution to the idea of the League of Nations, while drawing definite conclusions from this period of History, lacks obviously any very profound knowledge of it. The result has been that, both before the making of the League and subsequent to it, mistaken assumptions have been drawn from this precedent. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, for example, has recently published a study of this period which arrives at its conclusions by a most imperfect process of historical research. It cannot too often be repeated that if History is to be an aid to the elucidation of present-day problems it must become far more scientific and far less perfunctory and haphazard than it is to-day. No reputable scientist dreams of publishing more than tentative suggestions, while a large number of experiments are clearly necessary before his theories can be said to be proved. Yet in all countries Historians are ready to make sweeping generalizations about periods of History which they must know have only been very imperfectly surveyed, and while further indispensable material lies ready at hand.

I have chosen these three examples because they illustrate three different kinds of effects of the application of historical knowledge to modern problems, and in all three of them there was a definite attempt to use the results of historical research in action of the first importance. Many others might be added, some of them of great interest. The influence, for example, of the pre-

¹ *International Government*: Two Reports by L. S. Woolf, prepared for the Fabian Research Department.

cedent of 1808 on the Military Clauses of the Treaty of Peace was considerable. It affected both the nature of the control instituted and the character of the army which the Germans were permitted to retain. But it was not the deciding factor in the decisions which were made, though often used as an argument in the discussions which led up to those decisions. Nor did the precedent of an Inter-Allied Army of occupation in 1815-18 have much effect on the regulations for the occupation of Germany, partly because, so far as I know, there is no adequate account of that experiment, the only one that I could procure at Paris being the dissertation of a Liverpool student¹ written in 1914-15. Still less, I am afraid, did the precedent of the Treaties of Paris of 1814-15, which regulated in a humane and practical fashion the punishment and reparations to be imposed on an enemy who had conquered and humiliated the whole of continental Europe, enter into the discussions of the Conference. Both the Statesmen and their peoples were largely ignorant of these historical facts and in no mood to hear much about them. The immense influence which the History, true and false, of the Monroe doctrine exerted on American policy was, of course, always apparent, but it is an example which it would take too long to consider here.

Now it would, I think, be premature to draw any very definite conclusions from such evidence as we have at present before us, yet perhaps one or two deductions may be safely made. In the first place it is clear that the science of History was not adequate to perform even the services which were required of it. In many

¹ Arthur Hartland. He fell in the War.

of the problems of International Politics on which History had an obvious bearing, the preliminary researches, without which true History could not be written, had hardly begun when the War broke out. Much, therefore, of the historical knowledge which was offered as the basis for action was spurious. It was alchemy rather than science. So sporadic and badly organized have our historical studies been allowed to remain, and particularly in the domain of International Politics, that such efforts as have been made to obtain results have been of little avail. If the Historian is to be anything more than the mere tool of the Diplomatist, he must work harder, more scientifically, and, above all, with more co-operation than in the past. It is comforting to reflect that we already possess such a record of the Conference of Paris as has never been produced of the Congress of Vienna in the impartial and critical account, which Mr. Temperley has edited with such magnificent energy and skill.

Secondly, the Historian must cultivate a far more impartial attitude towards events than he has hitherto managed to achieve. Almost all accounts of foreign politics are disfigured by a national bias that is so common that it has come to be expected almost as a matter of course. Even before the War, however, there were signs that, in some countries at any rate, this grave defect was being overcome, and the publication in this country, during the course of the War, of Sir Adolphus Ward's impartial and scientific study of Germany, shows how a fine and humane mind can surmount such obstacles to the revelation of truth. Mr. Gooch's studies of the diplomacy which produced the Great War,

is another example of how the most controversial questions, which have an intimate connexion with present policy, are simplified and made to appear in something like their true perspective when handled without prejudice or passion.¹ The War has obviously produced in some Statesmen what may be called an 'international mind'. While still retaining and feeling the emotions of their countrymen, they are able to take a wider outlook and obtain a more accurate appreciation of the complicated problems of World politics. Is it too much to expect that the Historian should be able to do likewise? It is surely obvious that unless he can do so he can never hope to win from the study of past events anything of much practical value to his own generation.

Thirdly, it seems evident, from the experience of the last few years, that it is not much use teaching History to the Statesmen if the peoples which they represent are to be left in ignorance. It is not, I think, difficult to teach History to those who have the responsibility of directing affairs when they want to be instructed. After all, Statesmen are accustomed to work harder than students—or even Professors. But if they are to use the lessons which History can teach them, these lessons must also be learnt by those who in the long run control their actions. My impression of Statesmen, and Diplomats particularly, is that they generally desire to avoid evil and to choose good. The pathetic thing about them is their helplessness. Before they can bring their policy

¹ Since this sentence was written there has appeared his *History of Modern Europe, 1879-1919*—an excellent model of scientific impartiality.

upon the course which they know to be the best, a long preparation of public opinion appears to be necessary. And so they drift with the tide and often add force to a movement which they know to be proceeding in the wrong direction. That such a result is sometimes due to their own cowardice and lack of faith is true enough. In all countries the people have rarely failed to respond to those who have known how to appeal to the more sane and worthy side of their nature. But it is true that in the present age a nation's capacity to adapt itself to new conditions, and to find new expedients to express its ideals in the ever-changing material facts of life, depends more on the character of its education than on the character of its Statesmen. In the future everything will depend upon the education, in the full sense of the word, which is given to the whole body of the citizens ; and that the new democracies are in a sense aware of this fact is the most hopeful sign in our times. But a mere increase in the quantity of education will do little to enable the new generation to do better than its predecessors. If we are to learn from the immense evils which have come upon us, we must change the quality and direction of our teaching. We have long been conscious that the object of education is to train men and women as citizens of democratic communities. We must add now the necessity of training them to be members of the community of nations. The researches of the scholars must be conveyed as quickly as possible to the class-room and the press, until the whole mass of the people is informed of the nature of the world in which they live and the countless ties which bind all the nations together.

This is true of many of our subjects of education, but of History most of all. In the past it has tended to be in all the schools of the world a glorification of the national prejudices. The conflicts of the nations have been emphasized and not their co-operation. The exploits of the soldier and the statesman have been extolled and the humane work of the scientist and the social reformer relegated to a subordinate place. In the teaching of International Affairs scant justice has been done to the policies of other nations. Above all, no attempt has been made to set each country in its place in the World History and to show how much there is common to them all. In Britain we have corrected this point of view a good deal in recent years, and I believe that the modern teaching of Geography, so largely inspired from Aberystwyth, has influenced History teaching greatly to its good in this direction. But much remains to be done—and especially, may I venture to say, in Wales—before boys and girls will be given at school the knowledge that is essential to them if they are to be able to play their proper part in the modern world. None of us are, I imagine, unaware of the immense difficulty of the task, but if it be not at once begun it will be too late; and the place where it must begin is surely in the Universities. The Universities were the begetters and nurseries of Nationalism, and they should also be the first to realize the value of International Co-operation, without which all the gifts which Nationalism can give will be lost in a common destruction of our ideals. It is surely significant that this College, which has played so large a part in that National Renaissance of which the Welsh people are rightly proud, should be the

first to make provision for the scientific study of International Politics.

If we can do this, and, in spite of the darkness of the present outlook, there is much to encourage us in the hope that we can, in other countries as well as our own, we can also claim from our Statesmen a new attitude towards International Politics, without which all these efforts would be of no avail. Diplomacy must cease to be secret, and International Affairs must be discussed in open debate with the same frankness as domestic. Even now the British people scarcely realize how little they were told of the transactions upon which all their future happiness depended. I do not impugn the 'Secret Treaties' made during the War, because in war such devices are as inevitable as poison gas or high explosives. But in the thirty years before the War the British Empire was governed, I suppose, by as intelligent and humane Statesmen as any country possessed. Yet they kept the British people in almost complete ignorance of their most important international obligations, and with disastrous results. If the British and the German peoples had known of the negotiations for alliance that were proceeding between their governments at various times between 1895 and 1902, or if they had known exactly the obligations which bound Britain to France, might not the final issue have been different? Let us not deceive ourselves in imagining that secret diplomacy has disappeared because the first of President Wilson's points was 'Open covenants of peace openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view'.

The covenants of peace were not openly arrived at, but by a mysterious process in the Council of Four ; private international understandings still exist ; and diplomacy is still often conducted without frankness and screened completely from the public view. And so it will be, in spite of the efforts of those who, like Lord Robert Cecil, have understood what is perhaps the greatest lesson to be learnt from the failure of our Diplomats to avert the Great War. It will continue until the people can claim irresistibly a new responsibility, because they themselves have sufficient knowledge and training to demand it. The point is therefore intimately connected with those others which I have brought to your notice. It is useless to demand the abolition of secret diplomacy unless the democracy is itself prepared to undertake the burden of choosing between policies and weighing the possibilities of the future. And can we truthfully say that it is so prepared to-day ?

In these generalizations I have been dealing mainly with the historical aspect of International Politics. But I venture to think that the same principles hold good of its other branches. At the Paris Conference, for example, Mr. J. M. Keynes endeavoured to teach British Statesmen the elements of Economics. As a British Treasury official he could do no more and no less than he did, and History will always bear witness not only to his financial genius, but to the moral courage with which he fought his unequal battle. That same knowledge which was rejected by the Statesmen he has since given to the world—literally the whole civilized world—in the 200,000 copies of the monograph which will rank for effectiveness in controversial literature with those

of Swift and Burke. But it was useless for him to try and instruct Statesmen, while their people were still in ignorance. One cannot help wondering whether he would not have had a far greater influence on the Treaty of Versailles if he had preached sooner in the market-place rather than to the Council of Four. We have, in fact, reached an age in politics when expert knowledge must be brought within the reach of the mass of the people if it is to have its full influence upon affairs. Unless our Universities and Schools can solve the problem of how to do it, there can, I think, be no future for a democratic State.

These principles, obvious as they are, have not yet been fully comprehended by this generation. If they were, the League of Nations would be more generally accepted and more universally regarded than it is to-day. For it surely follows that without some such system as the League, International Affairs must be conducted in the dark, as they were before the War. Some common centre in which they can be openly discussed before the whole world is surely a necessary part of the education of the people themselves. It is true that even in the League itself the principles which I am advocating have won only a tardy and partial acceptance. But what has already been accomplished has shown that I am not merely theorizing, but speaking of matters that are already being put to the test of practice. The success or failure of that great experiment will be in itself a test as to whether the modern democratic State can learn sufficient wisdom and restraint to conduct International Affairs successfully. If it is to succeed, it will need all the help that the best brains

of the Universities of the world can give to it. Unless it can enlist the interest and sympathy of the new generation in a far higher degree than it has won that of the old, it cannot, I think, hope to overcome the immense obstacles that lie in its way. To study it, therefore, impartially and critically, and to impart the results of that study to as wide an audience as possible, must always be one of the first claims on a department of International Politics.

I have only been able to indicate to you a small fraction of the possibilities of the study which I am to direct. It has so many sides that even to touch but briefly on all those of which I am aware would occupy far too much of your time. In particular, I have said nothing of the means by which the wishes and ideas of one nation may be revealed to another—a point which is intimately connected with the interpretation of International Politics, and which the Founders of this Chair have specially taken into consideration by the provision which they have made for foreign travel and study by its holder. That such work can only be performed in a very small degree by one individual is obvious. We have become skilled in these days in summing up the psychology of the people and cataloguing the characteristics of the nations. Let us beware, however, of superficial and hasty generalizations. To win an intimate knowledge of the heart of another people is no easy task. Even Welshmen and Englishmen, who are so much in contact, often, I think, fail to understand one another. Such understanding can only be achieved by long and intimate study, and we can be glad that provision has been made in recent years in this

country, and particularly in the University of London, for such work to be done by skilled historians. Yet one who has to study International Politics must, if he is to have any real acquaintance with his subject, study it from many different angles, for its problems seem very different according as they are viewed from Paris, Geneva, Washington, or Aberystwyth. I rejoice to know that in this College there has long been special provision to give students opportunity to visit foreign countries, and I venture to hope that when they take advantage of it they will bear in mind the claims of International Politics. Nothing can contribute more to an understanding of the world problems of to-day than the constant interchange between different countries of students and teachers.

Let me confess finally that I have no exaggerated opinion of the power of intellectual conviction, by itself, to produce appropriate results. Humanity is moved by its emotions, and the springs of action lie deep in the hearts of men. If civilization is to be saved, we shall need something else than study, however wise and zealous. But it is the function of knowledge or reason to dig as it were a channel for the immense and potent forces that lie within humanity. The upheaval that the War has produced in every country has liberated new and formidable masses of energy. Unless an outlet is found for them, they will overwhelm the world.

And if in the course of these reflections I have often spoken dogmatically, in the attempt to place before you large issues in a short time, may I say in all sincerity that such an attitude is far from my real thoughts? No one could be more conscious than I of the great intricacy

of the subject, and the immense difficulty of dealing with it in an academic way. We stand now at the threshold of a new age whose immense possibilities can be only faintly discerned. Never, I think, in the whole of history has any generation had so fateful a choice to make, so difficult a path to tread, as ours. Nothing less than the existence of civilization is at stake. Unless we can find a way to a more sanely ordered system of International Politics, nothing good or beautiful that men erect in the world can be considered safe from destruction. It is possible that some of us in this room will see Western civilization perish from its own internecine struggles. It depends upon how we, and particularly the younger of us, react to the new and terrible knowledge which we now possess.

This Chair was founded in memory of those students of this College who fought and died in the Great War—died for a future that they would never see. Surely now, if ever, we can feel the truth of that profound description of Society which Burke gave to his generation:

‘Society is indeed a Contract. . . . It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection. . . . As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born.’¹

It was not given to those who fell to see the new world for which they fought. It may not be given to

¹ Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Works, v, pp. 183-4.

us, but our efforts are needed if theirs are not to be in vain. Unless we can summon courage and self-sacrifice akin to theirs, we shall fail in our obligations to them and to those who come after us. In a short time it will be too late. On the Students and Scholars who now fill our Universities and Schools comes as great an opportunity and as great a responsibility as fell even to those others. Only if they can meet it in the same way will they be able to complete the task so nobly begun.

